Wraithborn

Can a high school girl rise to the challenge and discover her innate abilities in a time of crisis?

Melanie had best hope so... or else ***Wraithborn*** is going to run five issues shorter than planned!

Melanie is, of course, the star of ***Wraithborn***, a new WildStorm series by *Joe Benitez & Marcia Chen* with art by Benitez & *Joe Weems*. "***Wraithborn*** is about an ordinary teenage girl who gets this power that she was never meant to get," Chen told ***CSN***. "And this power is the one thing that can save mankind from annihilation—or worse, enslavement—by the Immortals, ancient entities who we once worshiped or feared as gods, angels, demons, etc., but now consider fictional myths. And Melanie, the main character, is just this timid, clumsy high school kid who has no idea what's going on or how to use her powers, or even that these powers exist, and several "people" are coming after her—including Valin, the young man who was *supposed* to get the Wraithborn powers—various greedy humans who just want the power for themselves... and of course, the Immortals who don't want *anyone* to have this power."

The roots of the series go back quite some time. "If you want to know the history, we have to go way back to the 80's. ***Wraithborn*** started with its original title ***The Wraith***, which I borrowed from a *Charlie Sheen* movie from that time," Benitez said. "I didn't even know what Wraith meant then!. I just took an interest in the title because I got a glimpse of the commercial for the movie and noticed that the main character looked an awful lot like this 'original' character that I'd designed... I filed it away in my 'titles to use in the future' file...

"I had this idea of a power that gets transferred to the first living being it makes contact with after the previous host dies. I thought that concept worked well with the ***Wraith*** idea, so I added it.. Then I thought, 'What if this Wraith character was dying and was forced to pass this power onto a teenage girl?' I pictured a sort of female Peter Parker, and I wondered what she would do in that circumstance.

"Then, in 2000, after finishing the ***Magdalena: Blood Divine*** miniseries, Marcia and I talked about working together on a new book—something cool and kick-ass that we could have 100% control over. From the beginning .we both agreed to have the main protagonist a female. So I dug out a my concept with female leads and pitched them to Marcia to see if she connected with any of them . She singled out the concept I had for ***Wraith***. .She took .the basic concept and began to flesh it out, creating a backstory for the characters .At the time all we had was the girl and the Wraith..As we talked characters were added, the story took shape and the name was changed.. Marcia called me up one night and said 'what about ***Wraithborn***?' I'm glad we had to make the change, because I think this name works a hell of a lot better."

While ***Wraithborn*** is appearing under the WildStorm imprint, Chen feels that the book should have a strong appeal to fans of Top Cow's horror-adventure titles. "It certainly would fit in with Top Cow, as they've done several books in the same genre such as ***Magdalena*** and ***Witchblade***," she said. "We pitched the idea to several publishers, including Top Cow and Image, but decided that Wildstorm would be the best for us...

Benitez sees it as only natural that ***Wraithborn*** should have a Top Cow feel. "How could it *not*? Top Cow was my home for close to ten years. I was there from the beginning . I came up with *Michael Turner, Dave Finch, Billy Tan, Brandon Peterson Keu Cha, Brian Ching*, and *Clarence Lansang*. Together with the inkers and colorists, we helped to *develop* the Top Cow look!

"We were just a bunch of start up guys trying to infuse something different and cool into the industry—and I'm still trying to do that with this book. . I like big over-the-top action stories and dynamic art . The way I see it ,we have a canvas on which to tell a story and we can do what ever we want . It's like making a movie and having an an unlimited budget!..."

Chen explains the duo's collaborative process. "I do the scripting, but we do the plotting together. Joe does all of the action sequences—which is nice for me since that covers a large portion of the book!—and is in charge of 'making things cool,' coming up with scenarios to keep everything visually interesting and exciting. My focus is more on the background stuff, character motivations, keeping us on track so the story moves along, and coming up with reasons for why we need a car chase (we don't actually *have* a car chase, but you know what I mean)."

"Marcia and I are on the same page when it comes to the type of book we want to do," Benitez added. "She knows what I like to draw and she'll direct the story to fit my strengths and desires. She understands how important the art is to a comic book. And I understand how important story is. I want a good read that keeps the audience entertained, with real characters that can evoke an emotional response.

"I feel that some of the creators in comics right now have no idea what makes a good-looking, dynamic comic book... I've seen scripts where the writer wanted a big double splash of a freaking building and then allocated a quarter of a panel to introduce the main character of the story. A double splash of a *freaking building*! It reminds me of something *Todd McFarlane* said in one of those how-to videos (and I'm paraphrasing): you can either be the guy who can draws a really cool tree or you can be the guy who can draw a really cool character—and in the end, no matter how cool the tree is, it's still a freaking tree!...

"Look at what *Jeph Loeb* and *Jim Lee* did on Batman. That to me is just plain awesome! That's what comics should be... and that's what I'm trying to do . If you dig those type of comics, give ***Wraithborn*** a try."

The third member of the team is inker *Joe Weems*.. "Joe Weems rules," Benitez said. "He is far and away the best inker I've ever had the pleasure of working with. I credit Joe with helping me develop my style . I loved detail when I started working professionally so I was very 'noodly' with my pages—I hated leaving an open space on a page . I ran into some inkers that would bitch and moan about the amount of detail I would add to my pages—but not Joe! He was always up to the challenge..

"The public isn't aware of how important a inker really is to a book . The public perception is that they're just tracers. Well, let me tell you, I've had pages that I thought were really well done get completely butchered by a bad inker .On the other hand, Joe's the one guy to whom I could give a mediocre page and it would come back looking a hundred times better than what I gave him. He's just awesome."

Wraithborn's teenage star has a sort of "reluctant hero" quality that seems almost archetypal. Were Benitez and Chen inspired by other works in creating this story? "I've read a lot of fantasy novels where the reluctant hero theme comes up a lot, so I'm definitely influenced by that," Chen said. "I also wanted to explore what it really takes to be a true hero. When you have nothing personal to gain, no rewards, no songs, no glory, when everything you've cared about has been taken from you by this 'war,' when everyone you've trusted has in one way or another left you or betrayed you, when you've seen the depths to which humanity can sink—why do you still fight the fight?... "

While ***Wraithborn*** begins as a six-issue limited series, there's plenty of room to continue the story if the book clicks with its audience. "The miniseries is an origin story," Chen said, "and it actually includes a lot of setup for stories we want to do in the future. We've got a lot of ideas, and we hope people like the book so we can continue to share them!"

Does Benitez prefer this sort of mythic horror-adventure to costumed hero stories? "It seems those are the books that I've been working on lately . I actually just like characters that I can sink my teeth into. I wouldn't mind taking a stab a costumed hero stuff at some point . I think it might be fun to work on a superhero book, .actually; Batman and Spider-Man are two characters I feel I could do the best job on. I know exactly what approach I'd take with them.

"Right now, though, our attention is focused on ***Wraithborn***—and we hope that the readers will have as much fun with it as we are!"

Wraithborn #1, a $2.99 comic, is scheduled for September 21st release.

by Cliff Biggers

Teen Spirit

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Aparo Passes

Jim Aparo, the versatile comic book artist whose rendition of Batman (seen the Batman-teamup issues of ***Brave and Bold*** as well as in the pages of Batman stories in the 70's, 80s, and 90's—including the landmark "Death in the Family" storyline) ranks alongside the work of *Bob Kane, Dick Sprang, Carmine Infantino,* and *Neal Adams* in its importance, succumbed to cancer-related complications in mid-July.

While Aparo found fame at DC, where he illustrated ***Aquaman, Phantom Stranger, Green Arrow,*** and the Spectre (in ***Adventure Comics***) as well as Batman, he first caught the attention of fans through his work for Charlton, where he illustrated such characters as ***The Phantom*** and Nightshade, a backup feature in *Steve Ditko's* ***Captain Atom.*** Aparo's bold linework and fluid layout perfectly complemented his masterful visual storytelling; his reliability made him an editorial favorite until he retired from the field in the 1990's.

The artist's family has asked that, in lieu of flowers or memorials, anyone wishing to honor his legacy should make a contribution in Aparo's name to any worthy charity, as Jim believed that all legitimate charities deserve support. Those who wish to send cards or notes should send them to:

The Aparo Family
PO Box 28
Norwalk, CT 06852-0028

Coming Comics DC in October

Steve Niles & Scott Hampton make a beeline for the ***Gotham County Line*** this fall. ***Batman: Gotham County Line*** is a three-issue prestige-format miniseries that focuses on a series of grisly murders that take place not in the city itself, but in the 'burbs. Even though Batman has never gone suburban before, he can't ignore Commissioner Gordon's request once he learns the shocking details of these crimes.

Frank Miller, Jim Lee, & Scott Williams continue their retelling of the origin of Robin in ***All Star Batman & Robin, the Boy Wonder #3.*** Witness the transformation of a traumatized boy into a nimble, acrobatic crimefighter in this noir-esque revamp of the classic origin.

Batman #646, an ***Infinite Crisis*** tie-in by *Judd Winick, Doug Mahnke, & Tom Nguyen,* pits the Dark Knight against the Villains United and their point man, Black Mask. Batman has his hands full with the criminals of Gotham, but before he can neutralize Deathstroke and company, Red Hood plans to take matters into his own hands!

New artist *Pap Mhan* and cover artist *Tim Sale* join *Andersen Gabrych* beginning with ***Batgirl #69.*** Encased in ice by Mr. Freeze and held hostage by Nyssa, Batgirl is offered a choice: regain her destiny with the legendary League of Assassins or die a slow, frozen death!

Nightwing is no more — Dick Grayson's in a new outfit, and he's got a brand-new bag of dirty tricks. And those who thought he was simply "going undercover" are in for a rude awakening when they see what *Devin Grayson, Cliff Chiang, & Ande Parks* have in store in ***Nightwing #113,*** a ***Villains United*** tie-in.

As the dreaded OMACs scour Blüdhaven for all costumes, Robin finds himself in the unenviable position of trying to save the newly resurrected Darla Aquista — the very girl who swore to use her demonic powers to rid the world of Robin! Witness the confrontation in ***Robin #143,*** an ***OMAC Project*** tie-in from *Bill Willingham, Scott McDaniel, & Andy Owens.*

The world is going to hell as the ***Infinite Crisis*** begins —and this is too big a job even for Superman! But what has changed that scares those closest to the Man of Steel? *Mark Verheiden Ed Benes* reveal the answer to that question in ***Superman #222.***

The Spectre has come for Satanus, Metropolis's resident demon! On All Hallow's Eve, the dead will rise to protect their dark master — and Superman is caught in the middle! But Lois has her own demons to confront when her dead father returns in ***Action Comics #832*** by *Gail Simone, John Byrne, & Nelson.*

While Superman deals with a full-on OMAC assault, Lois discovers an alarming connection between her would-be assassin and the Dark Knight! Meanwhile, Luthor is back in Metropolis to build a new power base…starting with the Parasite! See Luthor's plan unfold in ***Adventures of Superman #645*** by *Greg Rucka & Karl Kerschl.*

Supergirl knows that someone other than Batman has been spying on her — and now it's time to find out who! But when her investigation leads to the Outsiders, there's no stopping the Girl of Steel! Plus, is romance blossoming for Kara Zor-El? *Jeph Loeb, Ian Churchill, & Norm Rapmund* play cupid in ***Supergirl #3.***

As superstars *Jeph Loeb, Ed McGuinness & Dexter Vines* rocket "With a Vengeance" toward its conclusion in ***Superman/Batman #24,*** the fate of the universe hangs in the balance unless the World's Finest Team — Batwoman and Superwoman! Guest-starring Superlad!

The biggest event of 2005 begins in October with the release of ***Infinite Crisis #1*** by *Geoff Johns, Phil Jimenez, & Andy Lanning,* with variant covers by *George Pérez* and *Jim Lee, Scott Williams, & Sandra Hope.* DC's icons — Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman — are joined by Nightwing, Supergirl, Donna Troy, Superboy, Robin, Wonder Girl, Green Lantern, the Flash and more as they face their most dire hour. What happens next will destroy friendships and lives, dictating the direction of the universe for the next generation! Years in the making, the greatest event to hit the DCU in over two decades is about to explode!

In *John Arcudi, Andy Clarke, & Leonard Kirk's* ***Aquaman #35***—an ***OMAC Project*** tie-in—Black Manta begins the water-breather gene therapy that will transform him forever! Aquaman must ask Geist to save Mera's life, but when the OMAC is activated by Brother Eye, it's Aquaman's life that may be lost!

Following the events of ***Villains United,*** a de-powered and weakened Firestorm seeks help at S.T.A.R. Labs San Francisco, which is under attack by a mysterious, unseen menace. Enter OMAC — its mission: kill the Nuclear Man in ***Firestorm #18,*** an ***OMAC Project*** tie-in.

The new speed team of *Joey Cavalieri, Val Semeiks, & Livesay* begin their tenure in ***Flash #227.*** As ***Infinite Crisis*** approaches, Wally West reflects on his life with his wife and kids and sees that the end may be near.

Bob Harras, Tom Derenick, & Dan Green kick off "World Without a Justice League" in ***JLA #s 120 & 121,*** both slated for October release. There has been a great Crisis of Conscience, and the JLA as we know it is no more. Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman are at odds…now it's time for Aquaman, Green Arrow, and Black Canary to bring the League back to basics. But this World Without a Justice League may be just what an old villain with some new tricks has been hoping for! Meanwhile, the remaining founding members of the JLA attempt to recruit new teammates—but will they want to be a part of a League that has resorted to some questionable tactics of late? Nightwing must decide to help re-form the JLA or support his mentor in keeping the team disbanded!

Keith Champagne & Don Kramer handle the creative honors for ***JSA #78,*** a ***Day of Vengeance*** tie-in. The JSA desperately seeks Dr. Fate to help them find the missing Jakeem and Thunderbolt. Meanwhile, as the Spectre's rampage continues, the team's greatest enemy has found the opening he needs to destroy the JSA once and for all!

Jim Krueger, Alex ross, & Doug Braithwaite continue their stunning bimonthly "all-access" JLA saga in ***Justice #2,*** which features Ross's painted art over Braithwaite's pencils. The Riddler leads Batman into a mystery within a mystery through his compulsion to speak the truth through riddles. Does he hold the key to the reason the villains are helping mankind?

A Day of Vengeance tie-in! The Fearsome Five return in ***Outsiders #29*** (a ***Day of Vengeance*** tie-in) to settle the score with the Outsiders, boasting a new recruit of unbelievable power — and the crisis rocking the magic realms raises the stakes to an unimaginable level!

Marc Andreyko, Javier Pina, Steve Sadowski, Sean Philips, Andrew Pepoy, & Fernando Blanco present a secret history of the Manhunter super-suit in ***Manhunter #15,*** a standalone tale.

Dave Gibbons, Ivan Reis, & Marc Campos bring the cosmic confrontation to a close in ***Rann- Thanagar War #6...*** and the final battle leads to ***Infinite Crisis!***

Madman *Mike Allred* takes the auteur role in ***Solo #7,*** which features the Doom Patrol versus the Teen Titans; "Batman a Go-Go!"; a Mister Miracle tale; and "Comic Book Clubhouse," featuring just about every DC hero.

The Red Hood pays a visit in ***Teen Titans #29...*** and that's not good news for Robin! This issue also reveals more about the impact of Donna Troy's return to the team, courtesy of *Geoff Johns, Carlos D'Anda, & Marlo Alquiza.*

Gail Simone, Dale Eaglesham, & Wade Von Grawbadger reveal the identity of the mysterious Mockingbird in ***Villains United #6...*** and that revelations leads straight into ***Infinite Crisis!***

In ***Wonder Woman #222,*** a followup to ***The Return of Donna Troy,*** Donna seeks out Wonder Woman and finds her and Supergirl in the middle of a fight with ***Villains United's*** Cheetah! But it's Donna's meeting

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with Supergirl that will have surprising ramifications for all three heroines. Is this a harbinger of things to come?

DC collected editions for October include:

•***Arkham Asylum Anniversary Edition SC,*** a trade paperback edition of the sold-out hardcover by *Grant Morrison & Dave McKean;*

•***Batman: Under the Hood,*** collecting the startling return-of-Jason-Todd storyline from ***Batman #s 635-641;***

•***Catwoman: When in Rome,*** a hardcover collection of the six-part limited series by *Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale;*

•***ElfQuest Archives Volume Three,*** a full-color hardcover collection of *Wendy & Richard Pini's* ***ElfQuest #s 11-15;***

•***ElfQuest: The Grand Quest Volume Eleven,*** collecting *Wendy & Richard Pini's* ***ElfQuest: Kings of the Broken Wheel #s 5-7;***

•***Outsiders Volume Three: Wanted,*** collecting ***Outsiders #s 16-23,*** which includes an ***Identity Crisis*** tie-in story;

•***Plastic Man Archives Volume Seven,*** collecting more classic Golden Age *Jack Cole* material—this time from ***Plastic Man #s 7 & 8*** and ***Police Comics #s 66-71;***

•***Showcase Presents: Metamorpho Volume One,*** a 560-page black-and-white bargain-priced trade collecting ***Brave & Bold #s 57, 58, 66, & 68; Metamorpho #s 1-17;*** and ***Justice League of America #42,*** featuring classic work by *Bob Haney, Ramona Fradon,* and others; and

•***Superman in the Forties,*** a trade paperback offering a heaping helping of classic Supertales from ***Action, Superman, Superboy, World's Finest,*** comic strips, and more.

Coming Comics CMX/DC in October

In ***Cipher Volume One,*** *Narita Minako* introduces Anise, a girl who feels incredibly lucky to attend the same high school as former child star Siva... so imagine her surprise when she learns that he's been switching identities with his twin brother Cipher for years!

Tanemura Arina's ***Kamikaze Kaito Jeanne Volume One*** introduces readers to Kusakabe Maron, who's a normal high school girl by day—and a reincarnation of Joan of Arc by night, charged with a mission to track down demon-possessed paintings and exorcise the evil spirits!

The popular Cartoon Network anime series comes to manga shelves this fall when CMX presents *Ishinomori Shotaro's* ***Kikaider Code 02 Volume One.*** Find out what happens when an apparently normal teenage boy learns that he's really Kikaider, a super-powered android with a secret "Gemini" device implanted in his brain to help simulate human qualities.

Coming Comics WildStorm/DC In October

As ***CSN*** told you last week, Captain Atom finds himself stranded in the WildStormverse in ***Captain Atom: Armageddon,*** a limited series by *Will Pfeifer, Giuseppi Camuncoli, & Sandra Hope.* But will the local heroes welcome Captain Atom with open arms or attack him, fearing him as the latest threat to their universe? The first issue features variant covers by *Jim Lee & Alex Ross.*

Tommy Yune, Jason Waltrip, John Waltrip, Omar Dogan, & Udon Studios call Admiral Rick Hunter back to duty in ***Robotech: Prelude to the Shadow Chronicles #1,*** which kicks off a storyline that leads into the upcoming ***Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles DVD.***

Alan Moore—joined by *Steve Moore, Kevin Nowlan, Hilary Barta, Rick Veitch, & Melinda Gebbie*—returns to some of his most memorable characters in ***Tomorrow Stories Special #1.*** You'll find new tales of Jack B. Quick, Cobweb, Splash Brannigan, and others in this 64-page comic.

WildStorm collected editions for October include:

•***Astro City: Local Heroes,*** a trade paperback collecting the five-issue limited series along with ***Astro City Vol 2 #s 21-22,*** the ***Astro City Special,*** and more; and

•***Tomorrow Stories Book Two,*** a trade paperback collection of tales from the final issues of ***Tomorrow Stories.***

Coming Comics Vertigo/ DC in October

Brian Azzarello & Marcelo Frusin look West for inspiration for their new series ***Loveless,*** which is described by DC as "a Western for the new millennium... that combines all the bloody action and atmosphere of a Sergio Leone film with the provocative storytelling of HBO's ***Deadwood.*** The series stars Wes Cutter, a wanted man running from a violent past — the horrors of the Civil War, a brutal stint in a Union prison camp, and the savage fallout of Reconstruction. Now he's on a quest for the one thing in short supply: peace.

Mike Carey is joined by guest artist *Frazer Irving* for ***Hellblazer #213,*** a special stand-alone issue. Back from the depths of Hell (literally) and devastated by the soul-wrenching events that took place there, John Constantine recalls the first time he ever worked his own unique brand of conjuring — with an emphasis on "con."

Darren Aronofsky & Kent Williams present an original hardcover graphic novel, ***The Fountain,*** that presents the full story of Aronofsky's upcoming film, a sort of "ultimate director's cut" that includes everything Aronofsky knew he couldn't get onto the screen. ***The Fountain*** crisscrosses through three distinct time periods: 1535, during an ancient Mayan war; the present day, following one doctor's desperate search for the cure for cancer; and the far future through the vast exotic reaches of space. Interweaving these three periods, ***The Fountain*** follows Tomas — warrior, doctor, explorer — as he feverishly tries to beat death and prolong the life of the woman he loves.

Vertigo offers another bargain-priced collection of first issues in ***Vertigo: First Offenses.*** This trade collection includes the first issues of ***Invisibles, Fables, Preacher, Sandman Mystery Theatre,*** and ***Sandman Presents: Lucifer,*** bargain priced at less than five bucks!

Vertigo collected editions for October include:

•***Doom Patrol Volume Three: Down Paradise Way,*** reprinting *Grant Morrison & Richard Case's* ***Doom Patrol #s 35-41;***

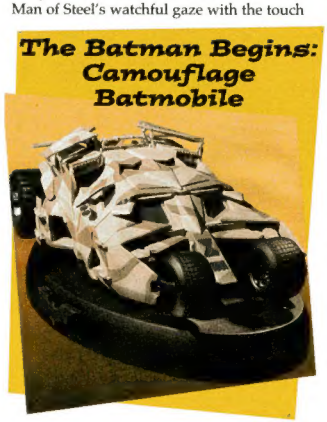
•***Chiaroscuro: The Private Lives of Leonardo da Vinci,*** collecting the provocative series by *Pat McGreal, David Rawson, Chas Truog, & Rafael Kayanan;* and

•***The Originals,*** a softcover edition of the near-future human interest graphic novel by *Dave Gibbons;*

Coming from DC Direct

The Batman Begins: Camouflage Batmobile replica, a 10" version of the "Tumbler" military prototype, is offered in a limited edition of one thousand. (October)

Jonathan Mathews' ***Superman Deluxe Statue*** depicts the Man of Steel flying over the famous Daily Planet building—and the Daily Planet Globe rotates underneath the Man of Steel's watchful gaze with the touch of a button. This limited edition, hand-painted cold-cast porcelain deluxe statue measures approximately 14" high x 6" wide x 6" deep. Due to the mechanical features of this statue, minimal assembly will be required. (March 2006)



The ***V for Vendetta Movie Mask Replica*** is a porcelain casting constructed from a mold of the actual movie prop, produced in a limited edition of five hundred. (October)

DC continues their 13" deluxe collector's figure series with the ***Green Lantern 13" Deluxe Collector Figure,*** a 1/6 scale figure that includes a "light up" lantern and a display stand. (March 2006)

Adam Hughes' ***Women of the DC Universe Bust*** series continues with ***Poison Ivy,*** a 5.75" tall sculpture. (March 2006)

Identity Crisis Action Figure Series 2 includes ***Batman, Elongated Man, the Flash, Black Canary,*** and ***Boomerang,*** all based on designs by *Michael Turner.* (March 2006)

Ins & Outs

In: ***Shadowplay,*** a new horror limited series assembled by *Ben Templesmith* and *Ashley Wood,* who will provide the art for the series. Joining them will be writers *Amber Benson* of ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer*** fame, and *Christina Z,* known for her work on ***Witchblade.*** Look for the first issue in September.

Out: ***JSA Classified #1,*** the series by *Geoff Johns, Amanda Conner, & Jimmy Palmiotti,* has sold out from the publisher within 24 hours of its release. No announcement at press-time regarding a second printing, but it looks likely.

In: ***Hunter-Killer Collected Edition,*** a bargain-priced compilation of ***Hunter-Killer #s 0-4*** (some of which are sold out from Image), should be in stores at the same time as this issue of ***CSN.*** "*Marc [Silvestri]* and I both are pleased and overwhelmed by the demand for our new series—once Diamond sold out of issue one, I had to take my own personal copies into my local store to fill requests from their customers, and I've never been happier to put comics in the hands of fans," writer *Mark Waid* said. "This special 'combo' edition of ***Hunter-Killer*** is for those latecomers who want to catch up and be ready for the thrill ride that kicks into high gear with issues three and four!"

Out: ***JLA #115,*** featuring the first installment of "Crisis of Conscience" by *Geoff Johns, Allan Heinberg, Chris Batista, & Mark Farmer,* has sold out of its overprinting. No word yet regarding a second printing.

In: Second printings of two ***House of M*** tie-in books, ***House of M: Fantastic Four #1*** and ***Incredible Hulk #83.*** Each will feature a cover variation based on the first printing cover art, and they should be in comic shop at the same time as this issue of ***CSN.***

Out: ***Freshmen #1,*** the college-freshmen-get-super-powers series by *Seth Green, Hugh Sterbakov, &Leonard Kirk* has sold out within days of release. "I love that people are reading and loving the book," Green said, while Sterbakov added. "I hope the readers enjoy these characters as much as I have, and I can't wait to get the next issue in their hands so they can see where the story is really going!" Image is considering a second printing.

In: ***WildC.A.T.S.?*** According to info posted on the Wizardworld site, *Jim Lee* will pencil a relaunch of his Image super-team series in 2006—and he'll be joined by writer *Grant Morrison.* No confirmation thus far from DC...

Continued on page 6

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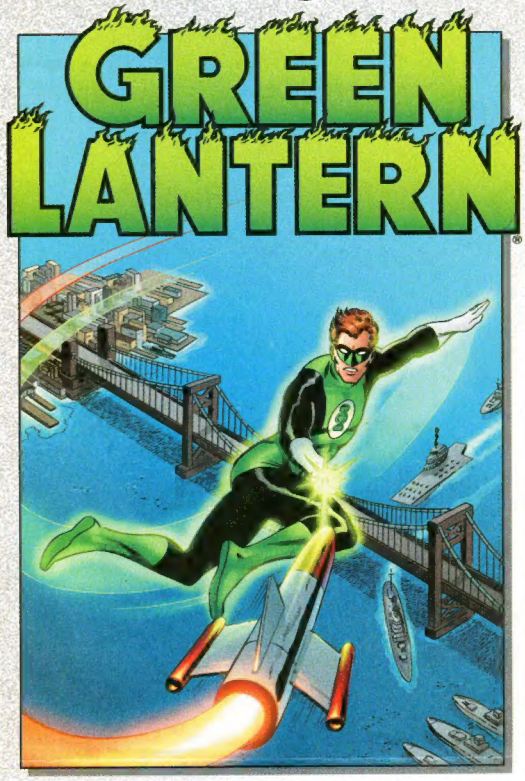

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Out: ***Serenity #1,*** the first issue of Dark Horse's series by *Joss Whedon, Brett Matthews, Will Conrad, & Laura Martin* that serves as a prequel to the upcoming ***Serenity*** film, sold out of its entire print run of all three covers within 24 hours of the book's release. No word yet on a second printing.

In: Several post-***House of M*** project are in the works at Marvel, including ***House of M: The Day After*** (one-shot); ***Generation M*** (miniseries); ***Son of M*** (miniseries); and ***Wolverine #36,*** which kicks off a year-long story arc, "The Quest," which spins out of ***House of M.*** 2006 brings another ***House of M*** spinoff storyline, a six-parter starring a major new villain from ***House Of M*** that begins in ***New Avengers #15.***

Coming Comics
Marvel in October

"The Other," a twelve-part saga that shakes up the Spideyverse, begins this month, running through all three ongoing Spidey titles—***Amazing Spider-Man, Marvel Knights Spider-Man,*** and the October-debut ***Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man.*** *Peter David* is the writer for all three October titles; *Reggie Hudlin* does the honors in November; *J. Michael Straczynski* follows in December; and then each writer takes on his respective book in January for the final three parts of the twelve-part story. This storyline, which grows out of JMS's Ezekiel saga, shakes up the status quo for Peter Parker, Mary Jane, and Aunt May as a new villain named Tracer enters the picture. Marvel also offers a behind-the-scenes look at the saga in ***Spider-Man: The Other Sketchbook,*** which features art by *Mike Wieringo, Mike Deodato Jr., Pat Lee, Joe Quesada,* and others.

Meet Vegas, a new kind of Marvel hero, in ***Amazing Fantasy #13,*** courtesy of *Karl Kesel & Carmine DiGiandomenico.* Welcome to the new borderland where bad guys don't always wear colorful costumes, but that doesn't make them any less deadly or dangerous. It's a lesson Vegas learns the hard way when a super-powered gang, the Renegades, kills his sister. Now he's out to even the score. Trouble is, Vegas doesn't have any powers himself...or does he? This issue also presents a backup story starring Captain Universe, courtesy of *Jay Faerber.*

J. Michael Straczynski & Colleen Doran join forces for ***The Book of Lost Souls.*** The destinies of most people are defined early on. Then there are the others – the lost. Those whose numbers aren't in yet, who could go toward the light or toward the darkness – indeed, who could be tipped one direction or another. And everything starts with the book. That's what Jonathan is about to discover. When he took a suicide plunge off the London Bridge more than a century ago, the last place he expected to land was on his feet, in the present, standing at the entrance to a tunnel into a world of mysteries beyond his wildest imagination.

Zeb Wells & Seth Fisher bring Marvel heroes and big monsters together in ***Fantastic Four/Iron Man: Big in Japan,*** a four-part limited series that begins with mass panic in the streets of Tokyo. The media has initiated round-the-clock coverage. Uncontrollable crowds are choking the streets, and kaiju hysteria has gripped the island of Japan for the first time in 50 years! Because the Fantastic Four, the world's first super-hero big-monster battling squad, and playboy industrialist, Tony Stark, have descended on the Land of the Rising Sun!

House of M #8 brings the reality-bending series by *Brian Bendis & Olivier Coipel* to a close—and what a close it is! How will the heroes of the Marvel Universe deal with the consequences of one person's actions? How will the world react to the permanent damage that has been done? Find out here! And don't forget... the groundwork for *next year's* big Marvel event can be found in the end of *this year's* big Marvel event!

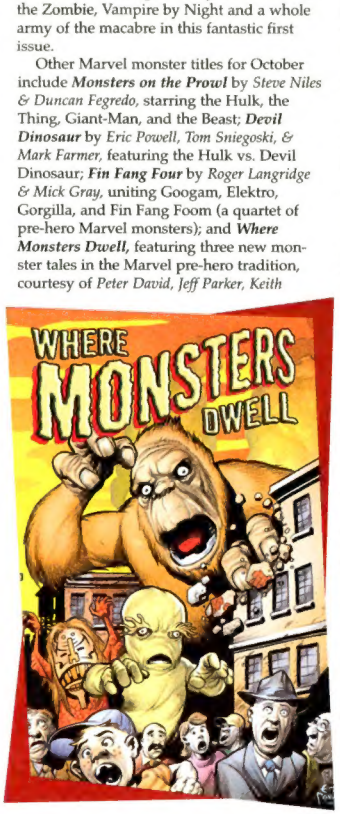
Peter David & Adam Kubert do the honors on ***Incredible Hulk #87,*** a standalone issue. The events of House of M are over...or are they? Bruce Banner and A.I.M. Scientist Supreme Monica Rappaccini find themselves in league one more time as Scorpion is forced to face the fury of the Hulk in order to bring her diabolical mother to justice.

The New Thunderbolts confront the New Avengers in ***New Thunderbolts #s 13 & 14*** by *Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett.* It begins when the Commission on Superhuman Activities asks New Thunderbolts to take down the New Avengers! You know what that can only lead to... Songbird vs. Captain America! Photon vs. Sentry! Radioactive Man vs. Iron Man! Speed Demon vs. Spider-Man! Atlas vs. Cage! Joystick vs. Spider-Man!

Christina Weir, Nunzio DeFilippis, & Georges Jeanty spotlight the New Mutants in ***New X-Men: Academy X Yearbook Special.*** The New Mutants are at their absolute lowest. Will the kids be able to work out their problems and become a team again?! A

Marvel goes monstrous for October with a variety of horror-themed titles, beginning with *Keith Giffen & Edu Francisco's* ***Nick Fury's Howling Commandos,*** a special covert "shock and awe" unit made up of Marvel's greatest horror characters. Join Warwolf, the Living Mummy, Frankenstein, the Zombie, Vampire by Night and a whole army of the macabre in this fantastic first issue.

Other Marvel monster titles for October include ***Monsters on the Prowl*** by *Steve Niles & Duncan Fegredo,* starring the Hulk, the Thing, Giant-Man, and the Beast; ***Devil Dinosaur*** by *Eric Powell, Tom Sniegoski, & Mark Farmer,* featuring the Hulk vs. Devil Dinosaur; ***Fin Fang Four*** by *Roger Langridge & Mick Gray,* uniting Googam, Elektro, Gorgilla, and Fin Fang Foom (a quartet of pre-hero Marvel monsters); and ***Where Monsters Dwell,*** featuring three new monster tales in the Marvel pre-hero tradition, courtesy of *Peter David, Jeff Parker, Keith Giffen, Arnold Pander, & Russell Braun.* Each issue will also include a classic reprint of a pre-hero Marvel monster tale by *Stan Lee, Jack Kirby,* and others.



Marc Sumerak & Gurihiru bring together the Marvel mutants and the super-siblings in ***X-Men & Power Pack.*** It's Halloween, and the Power kids are about to get the scare of their lives as candy is replaced with claws! Even with the X-Man called Wolverine on their side, will Power Pack be able to defeat a savage foe in time for trick-or-treating?

The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Horror 2005 includes info on monsters classic to current, all behind a new cover by *Dick Giordano.*

After many, many months, ***Secret War*** comes to an end with the release of the fifth issue by *Brian Bendis & Gabriele Dell'Otto.* And don't worry about continuity problems—Bendis promises that he's adjusted everything to fit into the current state of the Marvelverse!

Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo bring Jen Walters back in her own series in ***She-Hulk 2 #1.*** Join She-Hulk as she deals with the bizarre legal problems of the Marvel U.! Strange twists, exciting adventures, and lots of one, two, and three-part stories guest-starring all of your favorite Marvel Characters! In the first issue, Hawkeye's back... and it's *not* a ***House of M*** tie-in. So why is Clint Barton giving Jen Walters such a hard time? And how is his fate tied in to She-Hulk's latest case?

The enigmatic saga of the Sentry continues in *Paul Jenkins & John Romita Jr.'s* ***Sentry #2.*** This issue, which guest-stars the Fantastic Four, focuses on Linda Reynolds, whose life should be perfect—after all, she's married to the most powerful superhero in the Marvel Universe. So why does everything seem so wrong?...

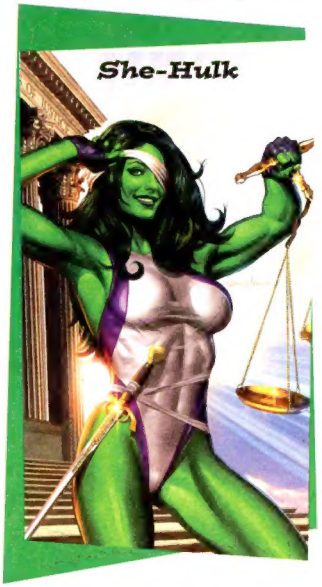
Tom DeFalco & Ron Lim bring together almost everyone who's ever donned the webs in ***Spider-Man Family One-Shot.*** Spider-Girl, Arana, Spider-Ham, Spider-Woman... they're all in here, along with many others!

Ultimate Fantastic Four #24 introduces the Ultimate Sub-Mariner in "Tomb of Namor," a three-parter by *Mark Millar & Greg Land.* Locked away at the bottom of the ocean for 5,000 years, Namor the Sub-Mariner's Atlantean tomb has been breached and now he's back to rule a planet. This is a Namor you've never seen before with a vastly different agenda. Learn about the ties between Atlantis, the Ultimate Inhumans and the super-races who existed before man ruled the Earth.

The Young Avengers begin their official apprenticeship to the New Avengers in *Allan Heinberg & Jim Cheung's* ***Young Avengers #9***—but when Captain America discovers the truth about Patriot's secret origin -- and when Asgardian reveals the truth about his own origin -- the team's entire future is called into question.

Marvel's collected editions for October include:

- ***Cable/Deadpool Vol. 3: The Human Race TPB;***
- ***Daredevil: Redemption,*** collecting the limited series;
- ***Daredevil Vol. 12: Decalogue,*** a trade paperback compilation of the penultimate *Brian Bendis-Alex Maleev* story arc;
- ***Essential Werewolf by Night Volume One,*** collecting over 500 pages of 1970's Marvel horror-hero adventures;
- ***Hercules: New Labors Of Hercules;***
- ***Livewires: Clockwork Thugs,*** a digest-sized compilation;
- ***Marvel Masterworks: The Mighty Thor Volume Four;***
- ***Marvel Visionaries: John Romita Jr.,*** a hardcover compilation of the best from JRJr's storied career;
- ***New X-Men: Hellions;***
- ***NYX/X-23,*** a hardcover collecting the two limited series in one volume;
- ***Powers Volume One,*** a deluxe oversized collection of the first year of *Brian Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming's* ***Powers*** in chronological order, along with oodles of bonus material;
- ***Spectacular Spider-Man Volume Six;***
- ***Spellbinders: Signs and Wonders,*** a digest-sized compilation;
- ***Stoker's Dracula,*** a hardcover compilation of the *Roy Thomas/Dick Giordano* adaptation;
- ***Supreme Powers Volume 3: High Command,***
- ***Ultimate Fantastic Four Volume 4: Inhuman;***
- ***Vision: Yesterday And Tomorrow;***
- ***X-Men: Bizarre Love Triangle;***
- ***X-Men: The Complete Age of Apocalypse epic Book Two;***
- ***X-Men: The End Vol. 2: Heroes And Martyrs;*** and
- ***Young Avengers Vol. 1: Sidekicks,*** a hardcover compilation of ***Young Avengers #s 1-8.***



Coming Comics Dark Horse in October

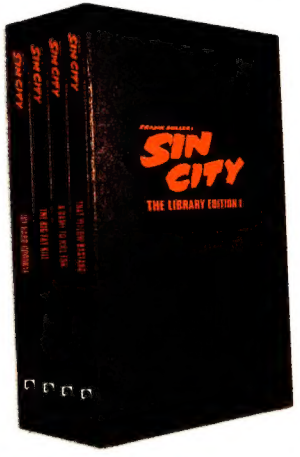
Dark Horse presents its first story focusing on Conan's years as king in ***Conan and the Demons of Khitai #1,*** the premiere issue of a four-part series by *Akira Yoshida & Paul Lee.* King Conan travels to the exotic land of Khitai, only to run afoul of an evil sorcerer and his demonic retainers in this tale of silent shadow warriors and ghastly monsters in the Far East.

Dark Horse invites everyone to pay a visit to the offbeat world of the Goon with the release of the ***Goon 25¢ Comic,*** a bargain-priced reissue of the original ***Goon #1*** that also includes a brand-new short story and an original cover by Goonmeister *Eric Powell.*

Kelley Jones herald in Halloween season with an original horror tale of the ultimate monster in ***The 13th Son: Worse Things Waiting,*** a four-issue limited series. Born to a young woman driven to insanity and black magic by the deaths of her previous children, the 13th Son is a creature like nothing this world has seen before. Humans are not his target. It's the other monsters who walk this world—the Wendigo, werewolves, ghouls, zombies, and vampires—who live in fear of his enormous and terrifying powers.

Dark Horse collected editions for October include:

- ***Chronicles of Conan Volume 9: Riders of the River Dragons and Other Stories,*** a remastered-color compilation of material by *Roy Thomas, John Buscema, & Val Mayerik* that originally appeared in ***Conan the Barbarian #s 60-63, 65, & 69-71;***
- ***Club 9 Volume 4,*** the latest trade of *Makoto Kobayashi's* slice-of-life comedy, featuring stories that appeared in ***Super Manga Blast #s 37-46;***
- ***Eden Volume 1: It's an Endless World,*** a post-apocalyptic survival drama by *Hiroki Endo;*
- ***The Frank Miller Sin City Library HC Set II,*** a 736-page four-book slipcased edition that includes oversized versions of ***Family Values; Booze, Broads & Bullets; Hell & Back;*** and ***The Art of Sin City;***
- ***Man With the Screaming Brain,*** collecting *Bruce Campbell, David Goodman, Rick Remender, & Hilary Barta's* adaptation of Campbell's upcoming film;
- ***Nexus Archives Volume One,*** a hardcover compilation of the 1980's SF drama by *Mike Baron & Steve Rude* that includes the early black and white issues as well as the first four color issues of the Eisner-Award-winning series;
- ***Oh My Goddess! Colors,*** a manga-sized trade paperback of the perennial best-seller by *Kosuke Fujishima* that includes four color stories in addition to the usual black-and-white material, a bonus original manga story by *Yoshitou Asari,* an eight-page profile of the Goddesses, plus, an eighteen-page "Encyclopedia of Goddess Terminology," cross-referencing the people, places, and events of the first twenty-two volumes;
- ***Star Wars: Clone Wars Volume 7—When They Were Brothers,*** collecting ***Star Wars: Obsession #s 1-5*** and the story featured in the ***Star Wars Free Comic Book Day Comic;***
- ***Trigun Maximum Volume 7: Happy Days,*** the latest volume of *Yasuhiro Nightow's* comedy-adventure saga of Vash the Stampede; and
- ***ZombieWorld: Champion of the Worms,*** a trade edition of the miniseries by *Mike Mignola & Pat McEown,* along with sketchbook pages and other bonus material.



Dark Horse merchandising items include:

- ***Classic Comic Book Characters: Magnus, Robot Fighter,*** a syroco-styled statue depicting the classic Gold Key hero, packaged in a litho-printed full-color tin box with a vintage-style pinback button and booklet about the character and his creator, Russ Manning (November);
- ***Kotobukiya Clone Trooper #2 Soft Vinyl Model Kit,*** an easy-to-assemble 9.5" tall model kit featuring the detail that soft-vinyl collectors have come to expect (November);
- ***Kong Collector's Chess Set,*** featuring sculpts based on *Peter Jackson's* upcoming film; and
- ***Lenore PVC Set,*** featuring 4" tall figures of Lenore, Mr. Gosh, and Ragamuffin & Pooty as designed by *Roman Dirge* (November).

Coming Comics Image in October

The Amazing Joy Buzzards are back in action in *Mark Smith & Dan Hipp's* ***Amazing Joy Buzzards Volume 2 #1.*** The new series begins with a race against the clock as Internationally famous race-car driver Stevo Vargas races towards Monaco and his doom as a group of Supernatural-Mod-Hipsters have other plans...

The incomparable art of *Arthur Suydam* is spotlighted in ***The Arthur Suydam Poster Book,*** a collection of ten 11" x 17" plates, the first of which is signed by Suydam. There's also an ultra-limited 25-copy edition that includes an original piece of pencil art in each set; talk to the folks at your friendly neighborhood comic shop if you're interested!

Rick Remender, Tony Moore, & Sean Parsons introduce alien-exterminating antihero Heath Huston, the last surviving member of the formerly glorious Fear Agents, in ***Fear Agent #1.*** Once part of the team whose members represented the strength of the human spirit, Huston now drunkenly goes about his job as best he can, leaping from one adventure to another.

Want a handy reference to tell which Freshmen have which powers? Then you need ***The Freshmen Yearbook,*** a handy "who's who" featuring art by *Marc Silvestri, Rodolfo Migliari, J.G. Jones, Joseph Michael Linsner,* and others.

Acclaimed illustrator *Michael Golden* is spotlighted in ***Heroes and Villains: The World and Art of Michael Golden,*** a signed 64-page compilation that includes oodles of artwork as well as an interview in which Golden talks about his own influences and artistry in comic books and beyond.

Steve Niles, Nikki Niles, & Ben Roman blend horror and humor in ***The Lonely Tombstone,*** a tale in the Tim Burton tradition. The story focuses on Darla, a girl who has found a new friend... a tombstone.

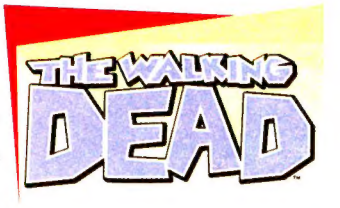
Jessica Suddreth was a normal high school freshman until she was magically transported to the fairytale world of Asamondo. Once there she trains to be a Spell Sword, a mystical warrior, to lead the peasants against the tyrannical King Elian. The good news is she's the best Spell Sword ever. The bad news is she still has all the emotions and insecurities of a fourteen-year-old girl... See her in action in ***Season of the Witch #1*** by *Jai Nitz & Kevin Sharpe.*

The ShadowHawk/BlackLight crossover continues in ***ShadowHawk #6*** by *Scott Wherle, Jim Valentino, Carlos Rodriguez, & Marc Deering.* The two new heroes come face-to-face with the living zombie, Corpse, and learn a few new things about their own powers!

At long last, the early issues of *Todd McFarlane's* ***Spawn*** return to print in collected editions! ***Spawn Collection Volume 1,*** offered in both trade paperback and hardcover, reprints ***Spawn #s 1-10;*** it kicks off a comprehensive reprinting of the entire ***Spawn*** saga.

J. M. DeMatteis & Mike Ploog continue their all-ages dark fantasy saga in ***Stardust Kid #3,*** the penultimate issue of the limited series. After a harrowing journey through an enchanted book, Cody, Alana, K.M. and Nathaniel emerge into a world where everyone and everything they've known is gone: Their families have vanished and their neighborhood has been transformed into a primeval forest of deep magic—and deadly danger. With the Woman and her followers on their trail, the kids seek hope in the form of the mysterious Stardust Kid. But does he truly exist? And can he possibly help them?

Crossing Jordan writer *Aron Coleite* makes his comics debut with ***V.I.C.E. #1,*** illustrated by *Tyler Kirkham.* The Violent Incident Control Enforcement branch of the FBI—better known as V.I.C.E.—are bad men sent in to do even worse jobs. When domestic terrorism strikes the U.S., the V.I.C.E. bring the bad guys to justice, using methods whatever methods it takes.



Get a sneak peek into the creative process in ***The Walking Dead Script Book Volume One,*** a trade paperback presentation of the complete, unedited scripts for the sold-out first six issues of the acclaimed zombie saga.

Image collected editions for October include:

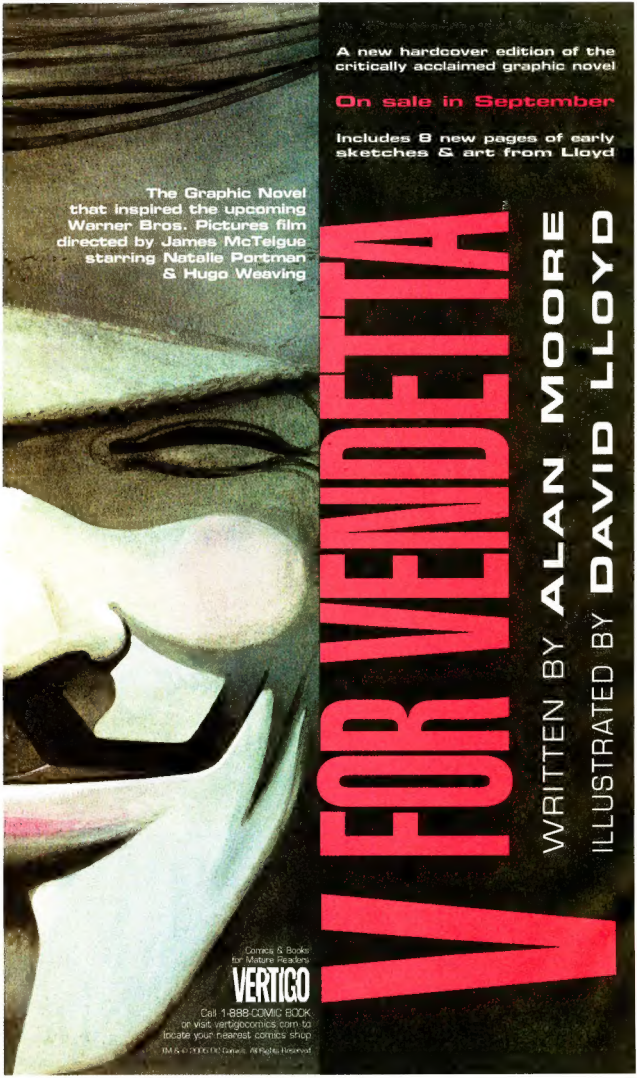
- ***Dawn Volume 1: Lucifer's Halo,*** a trade paperback of the first Dawn tale by *Joseph Michael Linsner,* supplemented with unpublished art and an introduction by Linsner;
- ***Battle Hymn: Farewell to the First Golden Age,*** collecting the miniseries by *B. Clay Moore, Jeremy Haun, & Ande Parks;*
- ***Ruule: Ganglords of Chinatown,*** a trade paperback of the *Jeff Amano-Ivan Brandon-Mike Hawthorne-Rick Remender* crime drama; and
- ***Savage Dragon Volume 12: Last Rites,*** continuing the comprehensive reprinting of *Erik Larsen's* ***Savage Dragon.***

Artesia Gets Company

Archaia Press, *Mark Smylie's* company created to provide a publishing home to his acclaimed fantasy series ***Artesia,*** is growing beyond its self-publishing roots. Later this year, the company will add new projects featuring work by a variety of creators.

"I never wanted to be *just* a publisher of ***Artesia,***" Smylie said, "though my heart still belongs first and foremost to writing and drawing that book, and I'm eager to get back to it. But my business partner, *Aki Liao,* and I have been looking for some creators that could bring something special to ASP. These artists and writers all have what we've been looking for and we're excited to begin publishing their work."

December sees the release of ***The Lone and Level Sands,*** a digest-sized full-color book by *A. David Lewis & Marvin Perry Mann that draws on the Bible, the Koran,* and other sources in its retelling of the Book of Exodus; and ***Robotika,*** a limited series steampunk samurai Western by *Alex Sheikman.* **Blood and Iron** by Christopher Moeller & Peter Bergting follows in 2006, as does a fourth ***Artesia*** miniseries, ***Artesia Besieged.***


A new hardcover edition of the critically acclaimed graphic novel
On sale in September
Includes 8 new pages of early sketches & art from Lloyd
The Graphic Novel that inspired the upcoming Warner Bros. Pictures film directed by James McTeigue starring Natalie Portman & Hugo Weaving
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